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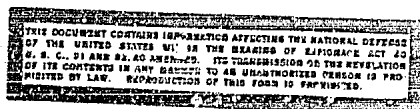
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CONDITIONS IN THE SLIVEN PRISON

According to M. H. [not further identified] who was in the Sliven Prison and recently came from Bulgaria, the prison is located on a hill northeast of Sliven and is used for female political prisoners. It is divided into two sections. The first section, which occupies the second floor of the prison, consists of 13 cells inhabited by 500-600 prisoners serving heavy sentences. The second section includes women serving lighter sentences.

About 1,300 Bulgarian women between 19 and over 70 years of age from all walks of life are imprisoned here. Every morning the prisoners are permitted to walk in the prison corridor for one half-hour and once a week they are allowed to walk in the prison yard. The women in the prison are charged with economic sabotage, with conspiracy against the regime, or with listening to foreign broadcasts; in other words, they are accused of not being Communists fighting for the liberty and independence of their country.

Many of them are in chains. Children up to 4 years old are with their prisoner mothers and some are even born in the prison. Some cells are only 2x3 meters large with small barred windows. There are also 10-meter-long cells inhabited by 100 prisoners. There are five cells 25 meters underground in which prisoners are tortured 10-15 days. These cells are windowless and filled with water. The lack of sanitation is favorable to disease, but the prisoners are denied medicines or medical help.

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